



Helping you make informed decisions and a difference in your health care costs.

# Ask About Generics

**Be Drug  
Smart**

**Americans are using more prescription drugs than ever before to manage health conditions and prevent problems, and those drugs continue to be more expensive. In 2004, prescription drug costs in the United States reached \$217 billion.<sup>1</sup> The amount we spend on drugs increases around 15 percent every year, and is one of the main reasons for rising health care costs.<sup>2</sup>**

## Cut Your Prescription Costs With Generics

There's an easy way to cut your prescription drug bill. Just ask your doctor or pharmacist about FDA-approved, high-quality generic equivalents when you get a prescription.

Generic drugs are as effective as brand-name drugs, and they cost less. For example, a 30-day prescription of one brand name drug averages \$95.54. A 30-day prescription of the generic equivalent averages \$28.71, which means big savings to you and the health care system.<sup>3</sup>

## Generic vs. Brand: What's the Difference?

While generic medications are widely prescribed and dispensed, many people remain confused about what "generic" really means. Here are the answers to some commonly asked questions about generic drugs.

**Q: Why are generic drugs less expensive?**

**A:** The generic manufacturer does not bear the cost of research and development, or the costs of initially marketing the product.

**Q: Are generic drugs safe?**

**A:** The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulates and monitors the quality of all drugs, both brand and generic. The generic manufacturer must provide evidence that the drug has the same active ingredients and works the same way in the body as the original brand name product.

**Q: Are all drugs available as a generic?**

**A:** No. Many are still protected by patent and are sold as brand-name only. However, more than half of all brand-name drugs do have generics available. Your doctor or pharmacist can tell you if your prescription is available as a generic and if it's the right choice for you. Be sure to ask.

More 

<sup>1</sup>Generic Pharmaceutical Association, 2005

<sup>2</sup>The Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

<sup>3</sup>National Association of Chain Drug Stores, 2004

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## When it Comes to Choosing Prescription Drugs.... **Your Decisions Count**

**Cut your prescription bill by selecting generic equivalents over brand-name drugs. Just take a look at the savings.**



### One Month's Supply

Brand-name	Cost	Generic Equivalent	Cost	Generic Savings
Prilosec®	\$142.58	Omeprazole	\$49.82	<b>\$92.76</b>
Prinivil/Zestril®	\$ 33.16	Lisinopril	\$ 9.00	<b>\$24.16</b>
Imdur®	\$ 64.31	Isosorbide Mononitrate	\$ 8.49	<b>\$55.82</b>
Tylenol® with Codeine	\$108.00	Acetaminophen and Codeine	\$14.69	<b>\$93.31</b>

Pricing is based on Medispan data, February 3, 2006

Brand-name medications listed are trademarks of their respective companies.

### Tools to Help You Keep Costs Down

BlueConnection Pharmacy Tools at **myhealth@wellmark** allow you to get answers about your prescription benefits 24/7:

- **My Prescriptions:** View a comprehensive list of all retail and home delivery prescriptions you have filled using your prescription drug benefit.
- **Wellmark Drug List:** Research prescription drugs to determine how they may be covered within your health plan, and to help you find lower-cost alternatives.
- **More:** Find a pharmacy, learn about drug interactions, and look up your pharmacy benefits.



**Learn More**

For more information about making a difference in the cost of health care, visit the **Decisions Count** section on [www.wellmark.com](http://www.wellmark.com).